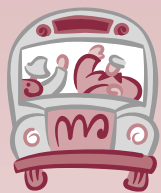


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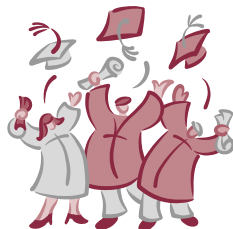


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# focus

## Preparing World Class Citizens

April, 2007

### An overseas education

## Learning experience of a lifetime for CCHS student ambassadors

A group of Colonie Central High School students are packing their bags for an educational trip of a lifetime.

Three will be waving *sayonara* and two others, perhaps, *au revoir*, as they board planes this summer to explore Japan and Europe as student ambassadors in the People to People program.

People to People was launched by President Dwight D. Eisenhower during the Cold War period as a way of putting ordinary American citizens in touch with citizens from other lands. He believed that people could find common ground if they visited each other's homes, schools and communities. The first delegation of student ambassadors went forth in 1963 and thousands have been visiting countries ever since.

"I think that educationally it's important for our students to see the world from both perspectives — theirs and someone else's," said CCHS Spanish teacher Michael Mensching. "It's nice to see how other people live and understand the flip side — the history they're being taught in America and how the other side views the world."

Continued on page 2 ... *ambassadors*



Left to right are Alexander Gordon, Alexandra Mackey, Cathryn Salamone and Ariona Adams, part of a group of students traveling to Japan and Europe this summer as student ambassadors.

## MathCounts for South Colonie middle schoolers

### 9 students participate in national challenge

Five students from Sand Creek Middle School and four from Lisha Kill Middle School had their math skills put to the test in February as participants in the 2007 MathCounts® competition.

MathCounts is a national math enrichment, coaching and competition program that promotes middle school mathematics achievement in every U.S. state and territory.

Schools select students to compete individually or as part of a team in one of the more than 500 written and oral competitions held nationwide. Top students advance to the state, and ultimately, national level. MathCounts challenges students' math skills, develops their self-confidence and rewards them for their achievements.

Continued on page 3 ... *MathCounts*

## ...ambassadors

*Continued from page 1*

Colonie Central High School has been a part of the program for many years, as have students from dozens of schools throughout the Capital District, who raise their own funding for the trips.

Mensching, a delegation leader, has been involved in People to People for five years, most recently traveling to China and Brazil. This time, he will head a student group traveling to Japan for two weeks in July.

"It's an adventure like no other," said Mensching, whose dream is to someday visit all seven continents. "I was in awe standing at the Great Wall of China, and our students come back feeling the same wonderment wherever they may go."

Heading another delegation of Japan student ambassadors is Colonie Central High School U.S. History and Global Studies teacher Erin Lasky. Lasky had the opportunity to travel to Thailand last year and hopes to share pictures and artifacts she collects in Japan with her new students next fall.

"I think socially, these trips are very good for our students," Lasky said. "Some I've wrote recommendations for in the past were very quiet. But, being away from their family and friends for three weeks I noticed a lot more confidence in them this year. They do grow up a lot when they're away."

### Preparing before they go

Orientation sessions are preparing the young travelers for what they will experience in terms of Japanese culture, travel, history, arts, education and more. Participants are researching these areas and making presentations to the entire travel group, which includes 40 area students and four teachers.

The learning experience is accentuated in Lasky's classes, where students are studying Hiroshima

**"I'm excited about visiting Hiroshima and Kyoto. Climbing Mt. Fuji will be a once in a lifetime experience."**

**CCHS student Alexander Gordon**

(where the first atomic bomb was dropped on Japan during World War II) in U.S. History and exploring Japanese geography (as they prepare to climb Mt. Fuji) in Global Studies. They've also created "peace cranes" as they prepare to visit Peace Memorial Park.

"I'm sure our students will really connect with that," Lasky said. "This will enable them to come full circle on the trip and make a real connection with their studies."

Other Japanese landmarks along the trip will include stops in Tokyo, the Imperial Palace, temples, shrines, government offices, national parks, shopping malls, restaurants and more. They will also spend a day interacting with and learning from Japanese students.

Joining the Japanese delegation are Colonie Central High School students Alexandra Mackey, Ariona Adams and Alexander Gordon. Ryan Couch and Cathryn Salamone are part of a People to People delegation traveling to Europe for 26 days this summer visiting France, Italy, Greece and Germany. All are extremely excited about the trips.

"I can't wait to go so I can explore the world and see for myself a new way of life," Ariona Adams said. "Experiences like these open up your eyes to new things and teach you a lot about yourself."

Alex Mackey said the experience is something students could never get out of a textbook. "I want to go to Japan so I can learn about a foreign culture firsthand," Mackey said.

"I have always liked to travel and I'm excited about visiting Hiroshima and Kyoto," added Alex Gordon. "Climbing Mt. Fuji will be a once in a lifetime experience."

**"Experiences like these open up your eyes to new things and teach you a lot about yourself."**

**CCHS student Ariona Adams**



## Forest Park celebrates Chinese New Year with ESL students

The students in the English as a Second Language (ESL) program at Forest Park Elementary School gave a special presentation about Chinese New Year at their Morning Assembly program. The presentation began with a poem about Chinese New Year recited in Chinese by a first grader. Students then presented information about the customs and activities related to the New Year. The presentation ended with second graders performing the "Dance of the Dragon."

## Sand Creek jumps at chance to raise funds for Heart Association

The sixth grade classes at Sand Creek Middle School held their fifth annual Jumpathon (Jump Rope for Heart) and raised more than \$7,600 for the American Heart Association. Jump Rope For Heart promotes the value of physical activity to school children while showing them they can contribute to their community's welfare.



This is a time when children can establish the foundation for movement skills. These are also the years when positive learning experiences can help establish a positive attitude and appreciation for participating in regular, daily physical activity for life. By jumping rope and securing sponsors, students raise money for the fight against heart disease and stroke while learning about the seriousness of heart disease and stroke, the lifelong benefits of physical activity and the importance of living a heart-healthy life-style.

## ... MathCounts

*Continued from page 1*

The South Colonie teams competed against other Capital District schools at the General Electric Research Center in Niskayuna. The Sand Creek team included eighth graders Matthew Snyder, Sarah Mead and Padraic Lyman, and seventh graders Mike Kramm and Tommy Osipitan. Helping to prepare the team were teachers Chris Balkwell, Ruth Brady and Katie Skanes.

The Lisha Kill team included eighth graders Joe Shell and Matt Reohr, and seventh graders Derek Hildenbrandt and Uwa Omorogbe. Helping to prepare the team were teachers Sherri Long, Kari Grugan and Nick Southworth. Gregory Bearup, South Colonie's Academic Head for K-8 Mathematics, helped coordinate the local effort. National sponsors were Lockheed Martin, Raytheon Co., Texas Instruments Incorporated, General Motors Foundation, M Foundation, NASA and Northrop Grumman Foundation.



Sand Creek Middle School seventh grader Tommy Osipitan works on a problem at the MathCounts competition.

## Cybersafety Day set for May 10

South Colonie Schools, in conjunction with local law enforcement, is sponsoring Cybersafety Day on May 10 in an attempt to keep children safe while surfing the Internet.

There will be two presentations for students and staff during the school day at Sand Creek and Lisha Kill middle schools, followed by a parent program that evening (time and place to be announced on the district web site).

Special guest will be 13-year-old Justin Berry, a nationally-recognized speaker, who became a victim of on-line predators. Berry has appeared on Oprah Winfrey, the Today Show and Good Morning America to share his story and create better awareness about the dangers facing young people on the Internet. In April, 2006 he testified before the United States Congress about his experiences in an effort to convince lawmakers to pass stiffer penalties for on-line predators.



### A 'green thumb' at Sand Creek Middle School

As a part of Sand Creek Middle School's recent Family Fun Night, students and their families helped Social Worker Helen Dohn with the spring crop. Students, siblings, staff, parents and even grandparents ventured into the school greenhouse to plant 200 geraniums and 10 trays of seeds that will decorate the grounds in the spring.

## Budget hearing

A public hearing on the proposed 2007-2008 South Colonie district budget will be held at 7 p.m., Tuesday, May 8, at Saddlewood Elementary School. The annual budget vote will be held on May 15.

## Poll volunteers needed

South Colonie Schools are in need of volunteers who can work the polls during the 2007-2008 district budget vote on Tuesday, May 15. Voting hours are 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. at the district's five elementary schools. Hours are flexible. For more information, contact the District Office at 869-3576, Extension 2443.

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